



Employee & Volunteer Professionalism in a Correctional Environment

Staff Development and Training

Performance Objectives

- ▶ Define professionalism in a correctional environment
- ▶ Identify 3 examples of consequences to staff for improper relationships with offenders
- ▶ Identify the characteristics of a good role model
- ▶ Identify 6 Do's regarding staff/volunteer interactions with offenders/students
- ▶ Identify 6 Don'ts regarding staff/volunteer interactions with offenders/students



First and Foremost, Thank You!

Without employees & volunteers providing the various services you offer, the Indiana Department of Correction would not be able to meet its mission. Namely, your participation promotes public safety by providing meaningful effective opportunities for successful re-entry.

To meet these expectations professional behavior is a must. Professional behavior is established through an employee or volunteer completing all assigned duties and responsibilities, while maintaining authority in a rational, objective, and fair manner that will not demean an offender or student.



Mission & Vision

Vision Statement

As the model of best correctional practices, we strive to return productive citizens to our communities and inspire a culture of accountability, integrity and professionalism.

Mission Statement

We promote public safety by providing meaningful effective opportunities for successful re-entry.



Overview

What follows are myths about staff/volunteer and offender/student interactions, as well as the possible outcomes associated with negative behavior.

This is followed by recommended practices when engaging with offenders or students within the regular duties of being an employee or volunteer within the Indiana Department of Correction.



State Laws

Policy which governs conduct with offenders and students:

Indiana Code 35-44.1-3-10
Code of Conduct 04-03-103
State and IDOC Ethics Code



What defines inappropriate conduct or interactions with offenders and students?



Myths about Staff & Offender Interactions

- ▶ No reports = No incidents
- ▶ Cross-gender supervision = Sexual misconduct
- ▶ Offenders give consent
- ▶ Code of Silence can't be overcome
- ▶ Informing offenders about policy = False reporting/allegations
- ▶ Rookies = Incidents



More Myths about Staff and Offender Interaction

- ▶ Offenders set up staff, staff are the only victims
- ▶ Little physical evidence only leads to “he said/she said”
- ▶ Prosecutors won’t prosecute so why investigate
- ▶ Officers/custody staff are the only ones involved in sexual misconduct
- ▶ Some offenders aren’t in a facility long enough for misconduct to occur



Sexualized Work Environment

Correctional environments can be sexualized, both intentionally and unintentionally. Below are examples of possible sexualized behavior.

- Verbal & nonverbal communication
- Open discussion about off duty activities, nicknames, and jokes
- Dress
- Demeanor
- Harassment
- Permissive behaviors



Consequences to the Department

Legal

Investigation

Liability

Indictments

Accountability

Social

Image

Less

Productivity

Morale

Security

Assaults

Less Teamwork

Manipulation

Consequences to Staff

Personal Sanctions

Demotion
Resignation
Transfer
Corrective Action
Termination
Prison
Fines

Legal Consequences

**Criminal
Prosecution**
Civil Liability

Informal Consequences

**Peer
Disapproval**
**Offender
Disapproval**

Consequences to Family

Embarrassment

Reduced Self Esteem

Separation/Divorce

Compromised Safety

Financial Loss

Loss of Respect



Preventing, Stopping, & Protecting Yourself

Do not get personally involved
with an offender or student!



Characteristics of a Good Role Model

- ▶ Not being personally involved with an offender or student does not negate being a good role model.



- Professionalism
- Good reputation
- Depersonalizing
- Confidence



“Do’s” of the IDOC

- ▶ Do be timely. Facilities often follow a set schedule, so timing can be important. In case you are ever unable to arrive at your normal time, please contact the facility with as much notice as possible.
- ▶ Do be responsible. No matter our position, the Department expects all staff to be responsible and to fulfill their role at a facility. This includes being familiar with your Volunteering Training and Reference Guide or Policies & Procedures.
- ▶ Do be firm, fair, & consistent. A statement heard throughout the Department, doing so requires a lack of bias in all interactions with offenders.



“Do’s” of the IDOC

- ▶ Do be optimistic and empathetic. You are in a unique position to help coach and encourage offenders towards positive and reasonable goals based upon an understanding of their abilities and faculties.
- ▶ Do be a good listener, as well as being respectful of an offender’s privacy. Because they are incarcerated, what privacy offenders retain is valued highly.
- ▶ Do consider that correctional facilities can be a collection of cultural, ethnic, religious, and personal beliefs which may not mesh well all of the time.
- ▶ Do operate as if everything you say or do is being recorded or overheard. In a facility, someone might be listening and watching at all times, so consider how your behavior may appear to others.



“Do’s” of the IDOC

- ▶ Do inform appropriate staff of anything suspicious or unusual, especially anything against policy. Your role is to provide a service, with the understanding that maintaining safety and security is everyone’s top priority.
 - ▶ Do follow facility rules and expectations. For example, please only bring a State-issued ID, keys, & pre-approved program or service-related items.
 - ▶ Do stay with your group or staff escort while moving on grounds, if appropriate. In case of an emergency, facilities need to be aware of the location of all, so it’s important we can be easily located.
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“Do’s” of the IDOC

- ▶ Do consider that within the Department, physical contact is intentionally limited. The services you provide reinstate a sense of normalcy, especially when considering re-entry, but there are limits to what contact is appropriate and approved. For example, consider how the use of physical force and physical abuse can be perceived.
- ▶ Do inform your supervisor if you are arrested for, charged with, or convicted of any crime, aside from minor traffic violations. The Department expects staff and volunteers to promote a professional atmosphere within and outside of facilities.
- ▶ Do inform the Facility Head, in writing, if you have a friend or relative who becomes incarcerated within the Department of Correction, as there are rules associated with interacting with close family/friends within IDOC.



“Do NOT’s” of the IDOC

- ▶ Because correctional facilities can be volatile places, don’t argue with others, use the language of students/offenders, or engage in lengthy conversations not related to your role. If a problem arises, notify your supervisor in a timely manner.
- ▶ Because we must remain firm, fair, and consistent, don’t show favoritism towards an offender, or group, over another. This includes promising any favors or actions of any kind outside of the services you provide.
- ▶ To avoid any perception of a conflict of interest, don’t accept any personal gift or favor from an offender, their family, or friends.



“Do NOT’s” of the IDOC

- ▶ Certain topics can be “hot topics” with offenders, so we ask that you don’t discuss topics regarding prison conditions, policies, reform, or any controversial subject matter pertaining to corrections with offenders.
 - ▶ Because correctional facilities can house offenders from all walks of life, the Department would ask that you don’t exhibit surprise at what you see or hear, no matter how comedic or sympathetic the matter.
 - ▶ As a means of avoiding any conflict of interest, please don’t act as a courier by purchasing anything for offenders, send them money, or carry/deliver messages.
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“Do NOT’s” of the IDOC

- ▶ Because prisons can be emotionally charged, please don’t become emotionally involved with an offender. Additionally, immediately inform your supervisor if you think an offender has become emotionally attached to you.
- ▶ Due to correctional facilities housing those considered to have broken a law(s), the legal basis for an offender’s incarceration can often be a topic of discussion. The Department asks that unless you are an approved legal-related volunteer, please don’t give offenders legal advice.
- ▶ It need not be said, but for clarity purposes, don’t share personal matters, or have any type of physical &/or sexual-related contact with an offender/student.



Congratulations!!

You have completed the module on,

“Employee & Volunteer Professionalism in a
Correctional Environment.”

If you have any questions, please contact your
Community Involvement Coordinator.

Staff Development and Training

